

1.0 INTRODUCTION

After the record-breaking wildfire season of 2000, Congress approved funds for federal and state agencies and local communities to develop and implement a national strategy for preventing the loss of life, natural resources, private property and livelihoods. The result of that planning and preparation is commonly known as the “National Fire Plan” (NFP) (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2002). This plan was approved in September 2000 and is fully titled *Managing the Impacts of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*. The NFP includes five key points: firefighting preparedness, rehabilitation and restoration of burned areas, reduction of hazardous fuels, community assistance, and accountability. In 2001, Congress released another directive requiring the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to engage Governors in the development of a National ten-year comprehensive strategy that would implement the NFP. For this effort, the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan* (Kempthorne et al. 2002) was developed. It was approved in May 2002 and involved cooperation and collaboration of the Secretary of Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, the Governors of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon, and the Director of the Council on Environmental Quality. The primary goals of the Idaho Plan are to improve prevention and suppression of wildfire, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and promote community assistance.

2.0 PURPOSE AND GOAL

The purpose of this mitigation plan is to identify and mitigate wildfire risks and negative consequences in communities and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas within two Fire departments (Figure 1) of Camas County, Idaho. For the purpose of this plan a WUI is defined as “the geographical area where structures (subdivisions and additions) and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels.” The mitigation plan addresses Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) criteria contained in 44 CFR Part 201.6 and follows guidance from the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan* (Kempthorne et al. 2002) by:

- Identifying fire hazards that affect Camas County and its residents
- Providing sufficient information to make mitigation decisions
- Discussing existing resources that are most current and best available
- Describing the process used to develop the plan
 - How it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved
- Maintaining the plan
 - How it will be monitored, evaluated, and updated annually within a five-year cycle

The plan will be maintained by a group of Camas County residents or Wildland Fire Interagency Group. The group will be represented by agencies countywide with wildland fire suppression experience and responsibilities. County Commissioners will take the lead for monitoring the plan while the other group members evaluate the risks and vulnerabilities to wildland fire within their area of concern. The maintenance process will allow local governments, when appropriate, to incorporate the requirements of the

plan into other planning mechanisms such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans which will include public participation through scheduled hearings and meetings.

The overall goal of this plan is to reduce the frequency of wildfires spreading from city or private property to public lands and from spreading from public lands to municipal property. Fire fighter safely will always come first. This goal will be achieved by reducing fuels in high risk areas and conducting public education and training programs throughout the county.

3.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT AREA

Camas County was established February 6, 1917 with its county seat at Fairfield. It encompasses 1,075 square miles. Camas County is predominately made up of rural and forested areas. The areas around Fairfield have experienced some growth and development. Development has mostly occurred within the low lands associated with Highway 20, which runs east to west through the southern extent of the county. Most of the industries within the county are related to agriculture products, their production, harvest or shipping. The only urban center in the county is the town of Fairfield. Smaller communities include Soldier, Corral, and Hill City located along Highway 20.

Landownership

Camas contains approximately 687,997 acres divided among four landowners (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. Land Status of Camas County, Idaho

Owner	Acres	Percent
BLM	118,715	17
USFS	317,744	45
Water	2,421	2.5
Private	227,456	33
State	22,258	2.5
Total	688,594	100

Population and Demographics

There are 991 people (Idaho's least populated county), 396 occupied households, and 287 families in Camas County (2000 Census). The population density is >1 persons per square mile. In general the population is light throughout the county with the densest populations occurring in the towns and communities. Due to farming, ranching, and recreation there are numerous individual home sites scattered throughout the rural areas of the county. The city of Fairfield has the largest population of 395 persons, with the remaining 596 persons being scattered throughout the communities of Soldier, Hill City, and Corral as well as farms and ranches located throughout the county.